

**Facilitating the  
dissemination of good  
ideas and the replication  
of successful projects**

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# **BUILDING ON INNOVATION**

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A report for the  
Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
by Michael Norton, Centre for  
Innovation in Voluntary Action



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Published by the Directory of  
Social Change for the Centre for  
Innovation in Voluntary Action



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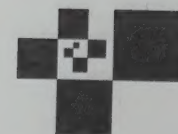
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The facts presented and views expressed in  
this report, however, are those of the  
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# FOREWORD

This comprehensive review of the dissemination and replication of innovation, good practice and successful projects will be especially useful as a resource document for those involved in planning – trustees as well as senior staff – for the sustainable development of their organisation. It will also be particularly relevant to organisations with an active membership, including those that support self-help groups or who are looking to use their local presence to develop a wider range of local services.

There are also lessons for funders, who could usefully insist that organisations making grant applications demonstrate their learning from existing good practice and experience alongside any new innovation that they are claiming for their new project. Extension of funding might be offered to successful projects, after positive evaluation, for dissemination and replication. More established organisations might be paid to offer consultancy to new projects.

An obstacle to this process is the insistence of those setting up new projects that what they are doing is unique and bears not the slightest resemblance to any existing service. As we know, many charities are founded on spurious grounds of originality, and their founders will never be convinced otherwise.

There is a role for intermediaries, national or local, or even for an academic department, to develop case studies that describe the critical success stories of projects with a good story to tell. A good example of this is the publication *"Good Practices in Mental Health"*.

There is also an advantage in linking replicability to sustainable development. It is important to find workable alternative financial structures to dependency on core funding, which is becoming ever more problematic. Replication to be practicable needs to be underpinned by the availability of *sufficient and sustainable* funding. Proper costing of the replication process would include a sufficient

management charge to sustain the existing organisation while in effect expanding its market share.

There are existing sensitivities. In the late 1980s, the talk was of national organisations 'parachuting' on to and crushing local initiative. The Centris Report's thesis of a first and third sector suggests that this division is not dead. Any promotion of replication strategies will need to emphasise importance of local leadership and empowerment.

Peter Houghton's work on *"Charity Franchising"* is impressive. There is a caveat. He talks of people who came to him far too late. It is only when their projects are at an end that they wish for immortality countervails on their personal possessiveness of a great idea. It is then that they may look to invest more imaginatively in their project's wider development. If we can find a way of working with this dynamic, we might also find a way of introducing this energy for replication earlier on in the process.

I would argue for a deliberate programme to encourage and support replication, where projects like the Archway Project (that stimulated this study) could present their ideas to national or regional bodies to get funding for a replication strategy. This might also be something that a consortium of funders might wish to develop by setting up a specific fund to invest in replication.

**Tim Dartington**

National Council of Voluntary Organisations;  
Organisation for Promoting Understanding in  
Society (from 1995)





# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report addresses the issue of how successful projects might be replicated, and proposes some ideas for facilitating this process. It has been compiled following a 'brainstorm session' organised by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on 13th December 1994 and attended by 12 people representing a range of interests and experience (funders, academics, social innovation centres, networks, small projects looking to replicate themselves, and consultants and advisers). The views and ideas expressed in this paper draw upon the collective wisdom of the group, and it also incorporates the ideas included in a paper produced for the session by Alan Lawrie. However, the responsibility for the paper and its contents and suggestions are ultimately the author's.

The interest of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the subject began when they received an application from the Archway Foundation for a grant to facilitate replication of the scheme that Archway runs for the lonely. The Foundation responded by making a grant for Archway to hire a consultant to explore replication strategies, but it also wished to examine the wider issue of how the replication process might be facilitated more generally. They asked Michael Norton, the then Director of Directory of Social Change, to assist them in arranging the brainstorm day. The Directory had an interest in this subject through the conference they organised and the publication they produced on "Charity Franchising" in 1992, which explored replication strategies.

The aim of this paper is to focus on ways of facilitating the replication process. The paper defines replication (and shows the difference between the replication of projects or practices and the dissemination of ideas). It shows the importance of replication, but also puts forward some objections that people might make. It explores some possible strategies for facilitating or promoting replication. And it puts forward some ideas which 'stakeholders' might take on board – funders, network organisations with local branches or affiliates, successful local

projects which would like to see further projects developed, social action centres committed to promoting innovation, and others who are concerned to see an effective and efficient voluntary sector.

## **People attending to the workshop on replication:**

**Tim Cook**, City Parochial Foundation  
(*funder*)

**Robin Currie**, PSS Liverpool  
(*local social action centre*)

**Tim Dartington**, NCVO  
(*intermediary*)

**Viv Davies**, Work-Shop, Camden  
(*local project*)

**Peter Houghton**, Charity Franchise Service  
(*consultant and franchising expert*)

**Julia Kaufmann**, Children in Need  
(*funder*)

**Pat Kneene**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
(*funder*)

**Alan Lawrie**  
(*consultant and trainer*)

**Janet Lewis**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
(*funder*)

**Anne Longfield**, Kids Clubs Network  
(*national organisation*)

**Sir Patrick Nairne**, Joseph Rowntree Foundation  
(*funder*)

**Michael Norton**, Directory of Social Change  
(*intermediary*)

**Marilyn Taylor**, School of Advanced Urban Studies  
(*academic*)

## **Others invited who were unable to attend, and who commented on the manuscript:**

**Mike Hughes**, Barnardos  
(*national charity*)

**Diana Leat**, Volprof  
(*charity expert and researcher*)





# WHY REPLICATION IS IMPORTANT 2

*There are several reasons why replication might be important:*

**Effectiveness in meeting need.** Where there is a shortage of funding for voluntary organisations and increasing competition for what is available, it is important that those projects that are funded represent the best ways of addressing the problems concerned. Successful projects therefore have a life beyond the patch in which they originated – even though the original promoter may have a purely local interest in the work.

**A sound investment.** Many funders highlight the fact that they are interested in supporting innovation or backing innovative approaches to dealing with problems. Addressing the next stage of what to do once the initial project has proved itself then becomes important. This involves the processes of dissemination and replication. It will be a cost-effective 'investment' for a funder to build on the expenditure in the original pilot project which has proved itself with a further expenditure to promote its dissemination and replication.

**Efficiency and economy.** Many people feel that there are too many organisations all trying to do the same thing, and none of them doing enough to combine their ideas and experiences. Good procedures for replication of projects or working practices could save considerable efforts and resources currently put into 'reinventing the wheel'. Many voluntary organisations feel that what they are doing is 'the best' and that it is being done in 'the most effective way'. But is this true any longer? Are organisations operating alone and independently becoming too expensive, too conservative, too resistant to change and unable to invest in the R & D needed to take their way of working forward?

**A demand for the delivery of services.** In the context of the so-called 'contract culture', purchasers want to know what is available, and at what cost, to deal with the particular needs and problems that they are

responsible for. They may want to use a mechanism proven elsewhere to meet local needs in their area. Many are interested in extending voluntary sector participation in service provision. When making a purchasing decision, they will need to be able to quantify what the particular service is able to do, to specify standards of performance, and to know the unit costs for particular levels of output and outcome.

Finally there is the question of **social equity**. If citizens in one area have access to a service which meets a particular need, then why should citizens in another area not have access to something similar? As the voluntary sector continues to develop its relationship with the State through the acceptance of grants and through winning contracts to deliver services, then voluntary activity begins to become much more a part of the local pattern and policy for service provision, and less simply a purely voluntary response to needs by those with the enthusiasm and energy to do something about them. And if similar services are to be available more widely, what then is the mechanism for seeing that this happens?





### 3 SOME DEFINITIONS

#### **Invention, innovation and being innovative**

**Invention** is the creation of an idea. **Innovation** is the process of bringing that idea into effect, making it work, reaching the market for it. **Being innovative** is something that the voluntary sector says it is, and something that funders say they wish to support. This often leads to a 'game' being played, where applicants try to demonstrate or highlight innovative aspects of their work to funders. Care has to be taken to distinguish this phenomenon, which may only be a means of getting funding, from something which really is new or different.

The process of social invention is well illustrated by the Institute of Social Inventions, which produces a catalogue of ideas which the inventors believe will change society. This catalogue is produced in the hope that someone might then take on the idea and develop it in practice (which is the process of innovation).

Social innovation involves a response to a newly emerged need, first identifying that need, then doing something to meet it; or it involves meeting a known need in a different, and hopefully more effective way. It may involve the provision of a service; or it may involve some form of process or technique or new technology; or it may involve the way in which the service is organised or funded. Examples of all these abound. The Samaritan help line, the advice arcade, AIDS buddies, homework clubs, sweat equity and self-build housing are all examples of innovations created by voluntary organisations. Innovation is not just something new, but recognising its potential and creating the opportunity to develop it.

#### **Dissemination and replication**

**Dissemination** is the process by which ideas, results or information about the work reaches people who are interested in hearing about it, and who are possibly interested in doing something with it. Dissemination can happen through a variety of mechanisms: publishing information about the work, giving a presentation to a selected audience,

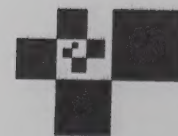
speaking at conferences or seminars, inviting people to visit the project and see it at work, networking with others, influencing funders, obtaining press coverage and publicity, etc.

As a result of the dissemination of an innovation, someone somewhere else may decide to give the idea a go. This may be a hoped for outcome, but the process of replicating the project is not here under the control of the innovator. The subsequent project may be identical to the original, or the idea may be taken on in general terms only and developed quite differently. An example of dissemination is the founding of the Community Organising Foundation in this country, based on the work of the Industrial Areas Foundation in the US. The idea for this was read about in the book on Community published in 1977 by the Directory of Social Change. After a number of visits both ways across the Atlantic and securing the necessary funding, the UK operation was established using the same methods and techniques which had proved successful in the US with technical support and advice from the US counterpart.

**Replication** takes a project or practice and develops it in another location. It is a deliberate action. In the voluntary sector, replication is less likely to *mere repetition* (which is what one finds in commercial franchising), but involve a more purposeful, more intelligent and more flexible process of establishing projects in new locations. A variety of mechanisms are available for replication, from the originator setting up a second and subsequent projects to licensing others to replicate the original. Replication involves a *decision* to do it, a *strategy* for getting it done, and the *resources* and *expertise* for the process to be successful. The replication process may be tightly structured or informal; but there is a danger when discussing the process of making it seem too scientific and too rigid.

**Franchising** is a well established and successful process that flourishes in the commercial arena, and appears in several forms. The most usual is business





format franchising, where a shop or a service is operated under strict terms from the franchiser. The process is designed not just to extend the service, but to make money for the franchiser as an alternative to investing directly in local outlets. Franchising is just one mechanism for replication. It may be too tightly structured to be used as is for the replication of voluntary projects. But commercial practice does provide important lessons for replication in the voluntary sector, including *control of quality and protection of intellectual property*.

To replicate a project, the *precise details* of the project need to be spelled out. This is the process of creating a 'blueprint' for the project. Some *legal protection* may be sought for the intellectual property and goodwill of the project (the trading name or logo, for example) to stop unauthorised replication and to keep the replication process under the control of the originating organisation. The blueprint is then *marketed* to interested purchasers. And the establishment of further projects may be assisted through some form of consultancy arrangement with the originator to ensure that the replicated project maintains the essence of the original and meets the required standards.

Dissemination is a far simpler process than replication. Many funders now insist that there be dissemination of some sort when they fund innovative projects or provide support for research or for a publication. The process of replication may require much more effort and expense, and generally speaking has not been considered to anything like the same degree as dissemination.

In practice there is a continuum between replication and dissemination. From setting out to establish precisely similar bodies, to encouraging others to do so; and from allowing a degree of flexibility in how the project works elsewhere according to local circumstances, local needs, local resources, to simply influencing how others respond to similar needs in their own area.





## 4 WHAT CAN BE REPLICATED

What can be replicated? A working practice or a technique. The use of a new technology. A service that meets a particular need. An organisational form or an operational structure. A funding mechanism to pay for the service. Or possibly even a broad concept. All these can be replicated. Broadly what can be replicated can be divided into three categories: an organisational form, a working practice, and an operational technique.

**An organisational form.** An organisation decides that the work it has developed in one area should be expanded into other areas. This might be done directly by the organisation itself setting up a network of branches. But there are alternatives. Most large conurbations have Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Councils of Voluntary Service, Volunteer Bureaux, Community Transport schemes, Pre-School Playgroups, Home Start groups, Age Concerns and a University of the Third Age. These are all independent bodies, but follow a national pattern. The relationship with the centre will depend on structure adopted for the relationship between the national body and local projects. With Home Start, there is a tightly controlled franchise model. With CABx, there is centrally and regionally provided information, training, support and working methods. With Age Concern and PPA, there is a national support agency which local groups can affiliate to. And with CVSs, there is a national membership body which is controlled by its members.

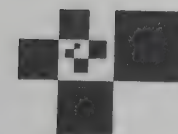
The setting up of local groups can occur in one of three ways. A group of local people may decide that a particular service is needed, come together to provide that service, and then affiliate with a national body which provides the local project with a brand name, advice, technical support and networking opportunities. Or the central body, through a local development strategy, can seek out opportunities for expanding into a local area where it does not already have a presence, either by finding a group of people interested in starting a project or getting the support of a local authority which wants to see such a service run and is prepared to put up the cash. Or an

originating group might decide to clone itself by finding a group of people or another organisation wishing to start the service under its supervision and control.

**A working practice.** A more subtle form of replication is to replicate an *idea* or a *style of work*. Detached youth work, family centred work, patient advocacy are all examples of innovative ideas which have filtered into the mainstream. They all exist in different organisational forms – for example in single service groups, multi-service agencies, national networks of services, and within statutory provision. It is not the organisation as such which is being replicated. And the replication process is less structured, veering more towards dissemination of the idea, which is then absorbed and adapted according to local circumstances. For example, in Oxford, the Family Nurturing Network was set up based on a model developed in the USA, and uses the materials, resources and frameworks established in the USA on a licensee basis. The Pyramid Trust which has a model for identifying 'problem children' in schools uses a technique developed by psychologists in the USA and used widely over there. Both these are looking to have their working practices adopted by organisations dealing with the same client group.

**Operational techniques.** Many operational techniques are developed which have a use beyond the organisation that originated them. *FunderFinder*, a mechanism for identifying funders that might be interested in your work, *VolBase*, a matching scheme for linking volunteers with projects that need volunteers, *The Raiser's Edge*, a fundraising support scheme, are all examples of techniques which have been packaged and made available to others.





# HOW REPLICATION TAKES PLACE 5

Most replication takes place *informally*, through the sharing of ideas, by meeting people and more formal networking, and the importing of ideas from other contexts (e.g. from overseas, such as the recent establishment of foyers for the homeless in this country – an idea that originated in France).

Some replication takes place as a result of a *deliberate strategy* to expand the service. Organisations such as Cities in Schools, Common Purpose and Crossroads Care have deliberately set out to expand their work. Each has developed its own particular mechanism for making this happen. This might be called '*producer push*'. Sometimes the organisation builds a replication strategy into its plans for the project right from the outset, or it may be very much part of the management ethos of the organisation. Sometimes the stimulus comes from an external circumstance – for example in the case of Kids Clubs Network, a government strategy to develop out-of-school clubs on a national basis.

Sometimes, through a process of dissemination or networking, there is such interest in a project that others decide to replicate the idea, seeking advice and support from the originating project. This might be called '*demand pull*'. This was the case of Applejack's, a restaurant project run by Camden Society for People with Learning Difficulties. Many people visited the project, and some were impressed enough to ask to start it elsewhere with the Camden project's support and advice.

Another process is where a group of similar services each started independently might at some stage come together to form a national federation or association, and then try to develop common values, common working practices and shared operational techniques. This might be called '*consolidation*'.

The voluntary sector is characterised by a great deal of local independence and ad hocism, with many organisations and initiatives being developed without any strategy for expansion or national

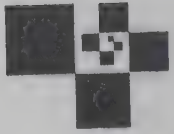
development. Few organisations have any formal replication strategy. Most will be doing at least something, and sometimes a great deal, to disseminate their ideas, through networking, publishing and public speaking.

Interestingly, some of the fastest growing of today's voluntary organisations have adopted a replication strategy, and this has been at the heart of their success. They have identified a niche need, designed a project to meet that need, created a blueprint for it, ascertained the financial and other operational requirements for running it successfully and sustainably, and then marketed it effectively to other interested parties.

As the voluntary sector comes more and more into competition with commercial organisations for the delivery of services, it may have to cope with the franchising strategies, the greater emphasis on marketing and branding, and the apparent quality assurance that its commercial competitors are seen to be offering – particularly in the fields of health and welfare. If voluntary organisations have an edge on quality of service, ability to mobilise volunteers and obtain top up funding, user involvement or efficiency over their commercial competitors, they may still need to pay more attention to replication strategies if they are to retain a significant share of the service provision market.

One key institution is the 'social action centre' which has grown out of the settlement movement. These are long established and credible local organisations offering management, workspace, local knowledge and experience, and credibility to develop new services and ideas which meet local needs. Organisations such as PSS in Liverpool, which started the first Citizen's Advice Bureau and the first foster grandparenting scheme, or Cambridge House in London, which started the first literacy scheme, or Birmingham Settlement, which developed money advice schemes, are committed to innovation and have traditionally been a seedbed for new ideas.





## 6 METHODS OF REPLICATION

*Replication can start on an opportunistic basis, with new projects being set up as and where the opportunities present themselves. But there will come a point when a more strategic approach will be required to develop the replication process. Peter Houghton in his book "Charity Franchising", sets out the following seven strategies for developing replication on a national basis:*

**Establishing regional offices.** Establishing regional offices can provide a focus for developing into the regions. An organisation which has adopted this strategy is the Home Farm Trust, which provides homes for mentally handicapped adults. Setting up a network of regional offices ensured that the organisation had a sufficient presence in the regions to implement a regional development strategy and develop local support for its local initiatives.

**Setting up a network of volunteer-led local branches.** Local branches of members or supporters enable people to meet and share their concerns, to focus local attention on the cause or concern, to raise money and to recruit further support. A local network demonstrates that there is local concern and support. This can provide a springboard for lobbying and getting the concerns of the organisation addressed at a local level. At some stage the local group might be ready to establish and run a local project for the organisation.

**Developing an association or federation of local groups** to focus attention on the particular cause or concern. Here, a group of organisations, each addressing the same issue in its own way, comes together to ensure that their needs and work are appreciated nationally, to provide common services and networking opportunities for themselves, and to undertake those tasks which are best carried out at a national level or on a shared basis. The Federation of Independent Advice Centres, the Law Centres Federation, Neighbourhood Energy Action, and the National Women's Aid Federation are all examples of this. The existence of a federation can

act as a stimulus to development of further projects. An extension of this is to empower the national body to take the initiative in stimulating the creation of more local groups and projects.

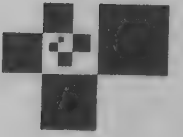
**Setting up a network of local agents.** Local agents fulfil a similar role to area sales representatives. They are responsible for marketing the organisation's services to potential purchasers. To be viable, the agents have to achieve specified 'sales targets'. This approach is rare in the voluntary sector, and may often be used as a stepping stone to developing a full regional structure.

**Setting up licensing agreements.** Licensing is the granting of the right to another agency to undertake certain specified activities, where the licensor controls the intellectual property. It is easy to see how this might work in reverse. You come across a service which you wish to replicate, and you request that you be able to operate a similar service using the same 'brand name' and operating techniques. Equally, if you want to expand, one way is to grant a licence to another organisation to develop your services in a specified locality or region. The agreement will specify certain standards of service that must be met in order to ensure quality control on the end product. The expansion of Common Purpose into Britain is a form of licensing, where an American product has been brought over here and adapted for use in this country.

**Setting up a national consultancy and training programme.** If an organisation wishes to share its knowledge and expertise, but hasn't the resources or the wish to develop its own replication strategy, it can simply offer training and consultancy to others working in the same field. This is more likely to be successful if you want to spread a particular working practice where your organisation is seen as a centre of excellence.

**Setting up a franchising system.** There are various types of franchising, including agencies and





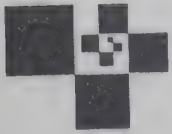
distributorships, pyramid selling schemes and business format franchising. It is the business format franchising model which is common in the commercial world (McDonald's, Body Shop, Kwikprint, etc.) which can readily be adapted for the provision of voluntary services. This has an element of licensing in that it grants a right to trade. But it is much more tightly controlled, having the precise method of operation set out in an operating manual. Home Start and Crossroads Care are two examples of organisations which have adopted a business format franchising approach.

Elements of each of the above can be mixed according to the needs of the area and the type of service involved. Each strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages, and each involves management at a distance.

Four problems may appear at this stage:

- Choosing the **wrong model** for replication, which is not appropriate for the particular circumstances.
- Choosing an **inappropriate partner**, where you are working through others, where the partner does not have the interests, values, skills or resources to make a success of the replication.
- **Lack of sustainability.** If there are not the resources to sustain the project, it doesn't matter what replication mechanism is adopted, local projects will fail for lack of cash.
- Choosing to set up the local project as a **new organisation**. This may be appropriate in some circumstances. It is the approach adopted by Home Start and Crossroads Care, for example. But it is *not always* appropriate. It may often be better to work with an *existing* organisation which is already providing a similar service, or which is interested in starting up the service than trying to establish a *new* organisation. There will be various economies of working with an existing organisation – it will not involve an untrammelled proliferation of organisations, and having a single-service organisation can sometimes be a deadening factor inhibiting further creativity and development.





## 7 DECIDING WHAT IS TO BE REPLICATED

*Before any replication strategy can be developed, it is important to decide what exactly is to be replicated. There are four stages in this process:*

**Define the service and the distinctiveness** that makes it different. Is it the service itself? Or an operational structure? Or a working practice? Or a particular technique? The people running the project may be too close to what they are doing to recognise the distinguishing features of their work. For example the Lodge Lane Advice Centre in Liverpool did not recognise that their particular style of working – using unemployed people to give welfare advice to other unemployed people, which was a low-cost self-help solution which also provided good work experience for those out of a job for a long period – was anything more than a rather ordinary welfare rights service. They did not see it as being a distinctive, different and extremely cost-effective approach to meet a widespread need.

**Recognise and quantify its success.** This means concentrating on performance measures, cost effectiveness, outcomes, ability to deal with special needs and quality of service factors, so that the service can be defined in terms of what it achieves, for whom and at what cost. It may be important at this stage to compare the service with alternative approaches to dealing with the same problem. This is what the first City Farm in Gospel Oak in North London did. It produced a simple leaflet comparing the City Farm approach with the traditional municipal approach of turning derelict land into a neighbourhood park. It showed that, in terms of capital cost, running cost, diversity of activity, volume of usage and other factors, it was a superior solution for turning parcels of derelict land into community use.

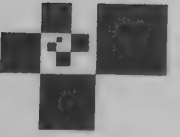
**Identify the critical success factors.** What is it that makes the project a success? Is it the people involved and their commitment and enthusiasm? Is it their personal qualities? Is it a clearly defined vision of what is being achieved – for example in palliative care this might be the management of pain and the

management of the meaning of life, rather than simply seeing the service as providing care for the terminally ill? It may be the vision and leadership of one person – as with the Cyrenians. It may even be a mundane factor such as the availability of a van which is critical to the success of the work. What are the critical success factors? And are they replicable? Or are the factors so personal to the project, that any attempt to replicate the project will be far less successful. An external audit to identify the success factors, possibly by a consultant, may be useful at this stage. Remember, though, that the critical success factors may be difficult to identify, or one might be misled into thinking that one factor rather than another is critical. And it may be that the critical factors are interactive with one another, or with the particular local circumstances, or with the contemporary culture prevailing when the project was established and developed (which may now have changed). There might be a particular danger for projects imported from overseas – they may work brilliantly there, but the culture and circumstances over here may not be quite right. This is something that those importing schemes from the USA might take note of, but it might also be just as relevant for schemes being transposed from England to Scotland for example.

**Define the resource implications.** At a time when resources to pay the running costs of services generally are scarce, it is important to define the resource implications of providing the service. This will define the cost-effectiveness of the project, and may therefore influence the decision to support it. And it will show exactly what resources are needed and suggest where they are to come from. The operational structure of the project may contain features which contribute some of the resources required for the project – possibly an income generation device or a local fundraising group.

It is extremely important to think through how the project can be funded on a sustainable basis. There are several different mechanisms for obtaining





longer-term support which might be considered:

- The project generates its **own income**, and is financially independent of external funding once it is up and running. This might be the case, for example, for a community recycling scheme or volunteer-run credit union. It might be that some start-up funding is required, but this could be presented to funders as 'an investment' to get the project going.
- The project relies largely on the **efforts of volunteers** either to carry out the work or as a support group to raise money, so money is no longer a critical factor. This might be the case, for example, for the Archway Foundation, where appropriate existing bodies might incorporate the scheme into their work programme, incorporating any overhead costs into existing running costs.
- The project can attract **funding from local purchasing bodies**, especially schools and education authorities for educational schemes, and health authorities and social service departments for care schemes. This will be on the basis of a statutory responsibility for the problem or need, and the cost-effectiveness of the scheme in meeting that need.
- **Central government** makes available a line of funding, which is the case for the expansion of out-of-school clubs by Kids Clubs Network.
- An **ad hoc** approach, where the onus is left on the local partner to identify and develop sources of money the project. The difficulty here is that it may be difficult to get new projects going with adequate funding to ensure success, or that after initial interest in the project, it becomes difficult to secure funding for the longer term.

The availability of volunteer input, earned income potential or secure long term statutory support to support the project (or any combination of these) is an important consideration before thinking about a replication strategy.

At this stage it will be possible to decide whether to consider the project for replication. Factors include:

- **A clearly defined 'product'** with its distinctiveness recognised.
- **Meeting a need** or a special need which is held to be important.
- **Easily delivered.**
- With the **critical success factors identified** and understood.
- With **measurable performance and outcomes** (short and long term).
- **Cost effectively delivered.**
- Which is likely to **attract sustained support** from investors, purchasers, volunteers or funders.

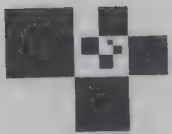
*Three further points are worth making:*

Whilst lots of projects don't recognise their success, many claim success for schemes that don't actually work very well. One danger is that we might attempt to replicate failure. Another is that even if it does work, that it can't be made to work elsewhere. It is not just the project, but the critical success factors which must be replicable.

There is an assumption that we can tell what works. Even that we can define precisely what the problem we are trying to address actually is. For example, in the field of teenage delinquency, do we really understand what the problem is? Finding out could be a much more complicated process than simply trying to spread what seems a good idea. It might even mean controlled trials to produce the evidence that the idea actually works.

However, society is changing extremely fast and some of its needs and problems appear increasingly urgent. Do we have time to take a rational rather than an instinctual approach? Or should we back our hunches, and hope that we got it right? And can we be flexible enough in our approach to replication to adapt and improve what we are trying to do in the light of the experience and the insights we gain as we go along?





## 8 STAGES IN REPLICATION

*There are six main stages in the replication process:*

**Evaluation of the initial pilot project.** The pilot project may start with a funding application to undertake a piece of innovative work. The initial funding will probably be for a limited period of time (usually up to three years). If the work is successful, at the end of this pilot period the impact and outcomes of the work will be evaluated, and options for funding the project on a continuing basis can be explored. At this stage, you will probably want to disseminate the success of the project.

**The decision to expand and replicate.** The interest in expanding might be triggered by an approach from outside or by an internal desire to be bigger. It is useful to explore people's motives for expansion. Many organisations have had a negative experience of expanding too fast and growing beyond their management capacity. At this stage, decisions will also need to be taken about the particular model for replication to be used. Is the objective to expand your own organisation, or to enable others to set up similar activities? What sort of control do you need or require over the process and over the product? What are the resource implications for yourselves – in terms of practical and technical information you will need, people to provide the expertise, and any cash outlay of investment – and do you have or can you get these resources? It may also be useful to investigate the competitive environment in which the service operates to understand the threats and opportunities better – what similar projects are doing, the developments by rival organisations and near competitors.

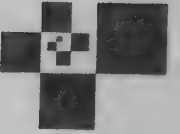
**Packaging the product.** The packaging process is about identifying the most important lessons that have been learned in setting the original project up, identifying what is needed to make it work elsewhere, and assembling the information and documentation that will be needed for the replication process. This is covered in more detail in *Section 9*.

**Connecting with new groups.** The connecting phase is often quite accidental. Contacts are made with people doing similar work, and arrangements developed on an informal basis. Or the process may be more formal, right through to invitations to tender. There is a danger of relying overmuch on goodwill at this stage. A clear understanding and agreement is essential. Both parties need to agree what their relationship is to be. Issues of legal responsibility, use of name, commitment to core values and the quality expected, all need agreeing. Both parties need to know what to expect from each other, what will be provided from the centre, what has to remain constant and what can be flexible and adapted to local circumstances.

**Start up.** This stage involves the usual tasks required for the setting up of any voluntary initiative: establishing a steering group, carrying out needs research or a feasibility study, obtaining a commitment from interested parties and securing the necessary funding. In a properly managed replication process, all this will be much easier than for a project starting from scratch, as documentation such as budgets, quality standards, job descriptions, etc. will all be already available. And it should be easier to convince funders about the value of supporting the project, as evidence already exists from established projects, and there are in-built systems for support and help once the project gets under way. During this stage the centre can provide practical support, consultancy, training, mentoring, and even a secondment of a key person on a temporary basis.

**Linking with the network.** This is about the long-term relationship between the original project or the central organisation developing the replication process and the locally replicated projects. This is about who gets what for what. There is likely to be a financial transfer from the local project to the centre, and a support structure organised from the centre to aid the development of the service, to meet changing needs and to facilitate interaction between the different local



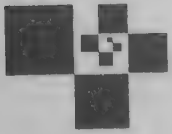


projects. The best circumstances are where this long-term relationship is clearly defined and understood. There needs to be an element of control and an element of flexibility. There is often the possibility of tension between the originator of the scheme and new people who may have different ideas and want to take the idea in different directions. In the private sector, a franchise agreement provides a contractual basis for working together. But this can become either too rigid or too contentious when it comes to delivering a voluntary service. Relationships are often best held together by:

- A **strong identity** for the product.
- A commitment to **shared values**.
- Clear **commitment to quality** standards.
- A shared view of the value of **the particular approach** to the work.
- **Sharing of experience** through support, training, networking.
- A demonstrable **economic advantage** through central purchasing, the provision of management services.

The relationship between the centre and local branches or affiliates is fast becoming one of the most controversial issues in modern organisations. For voluntary organisations this might be exacerbated by the requirements of the 1992 and 1993 Charities Acts for control by the centre over the financial affairs and the fundraising carried out in the organisation's name by local branches.





## 9 CREATING A BLUEPRINT

A blueprint is a document which precisely defines the project, its critical success factors and how it will be operated. For the replication of an organisational structure, a blueprint might cover a number of topic areas:

- Project summary
- Background to the project – needs, the approach to meeting those needs, how the project works, why the particular approach works
- Background to the organisation – its history, competence, mission, values
- Operating blueprint for the project:
  - project description – aims and basic operational details
  - client group – eligibility, different target groups, selection, process, results, desired and actual outcomes
  - the service – what service is provided, how it is provided
  - staff – staffing requirements (both paid and volunteer), job descriptions and functions, skill requirements, training of staff
  - support and supervision of the staff, operating and organisational structures
  - resources – the premises, equipment, technical, information that are required
  - legal requirements
  - professional links and collaborations; links and support to be provided by the initial project
  - marketing mechanisms to reach target clients or referral agents
  - critical path checklist and time frame for start up
- Financial requirements
  - budget for start up and annual operating budget
  - funding requirements – earnings and grants
  - fundraising opportunities and approaches
- Evaluation
  - output expected levels and measures; quality measures and targets
  - outcomes desired and achieved (for the different client groups)
  - impact and consequences for the client and for the project sponsor
  - how the project will be evaluated

- costs and cost-effectiveness indicators and comparisons
- Project partners
  - the types of organisations that might be interested in operating the project
  - what's in it for them and what they are required to put into it
  - the next steps if they are interested
- Supporting documentation
  - feedback from users and funders
  - photographs and building plans
  - job descriptions of staff positions and person specifications
  - publicity and marketing material
  - press comment

This blueprint might then be produced in different formats:

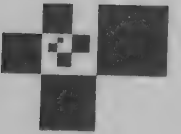
- A basic leaflet or **poster** with a broad description and key 'selling points' to market the idea.
- A blueprint **manual** for the project which is an operating manual for those who will be replicating the project.
- A **project file** collating detailed material which enlarges on the material contained in the manual (as relevant and required) and any supporting information and documentation.

The originating organisation might also provide further information and details about its work as needed and requested, assist in feasibility studies for replicating the project elsewhere, and provide training and consultancy to projects in-the-making and on stream.

The benefits of producing a blueprint are twofold:

- The blueprint enables an organisation itself to develop and start to implement its own *replication strategy*. A blueprint defining what is to be replicated is an essential starting point for this.
- To assist in the *replication process*. All the information required is collected and to hand.





# SOME OBJECTIONS TO REPLICATION 10

*At this stage, it might be helpful to set out some possible objections to replication:*

There may be an aversion to adopting a **rigid blueprint** developed elsewhere for local use. For example in Liverpool, a Crossroads Care scheme and a Leonard Cheshire Family Support scheme were both rejected by the Nursing and Family Support services when a care attendant scheme was being mooted, as being too rigid. A locally devised solution was preferred. The key question is whether the replication process can be flexible enough and the blueprint adapted sufficiently to meet local requirements.

A feeling of **loss of ownership**, autonomy and control over the operation. These are all prized in the voluntary sector, and may not easily be given up. They may be luxuries in the context of the growth of the independent provider sector. But it is important to find mechanisms for avoiding tension between the central control and the local delivery.

**Loss of control over quality** of service can be a serious problem. If someone takes on your innovative idea and does it badly or fails, then this could reflect on your own work. And what if someone dies as a result of poor standards? Quality control issues are important, and need to be addressed when considering replication.

A feeling that the **local situation is in some way special**, and that only a specially designed service will suffice.

A feeling that people's **problems are too sensitive** to be dealt with as if they were McDonald's customers. This may boil down to a question of quality, and quality issues must form a central part of the blueprint if the service is to succeed.

Replication may **not be possible**. Structures and systems are not all. It may come down to the people running it, and even the existence of a charismatic leader. Critical success factors must be clearly

identified, if the replication process is to have a chance of success.

Standardisation and **loss of diversity**. If one method is universally adopted for dealing with any particular problem, and if that method is tightly defined and packaged, then the provision may become too uniform, too dull, too unresponsive. Competition of ideas can be extremely enervating and help generate more new and better ideas.

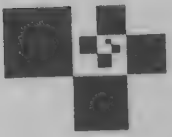
A failure to deal with **special needs**. The scheme may target the main user group, and not be able to deal with others with more sensitive or slightly different needs. For example, one criticism that has been levelled against the Crossroads scheme is that it does not meet the particular needs of black and minority ethnic people.

A pressure to ignore the **importance of campaigning and policy development** at the expense of service delivery. A replication process is all about extending services into other areas. But an important role of voluntary organisations is to inform themselves of issues and changing needs through running services, and then to use this experience to influence provision and policy generally. This role needs to be recognised and sustained.

A **loss of opportunity for continuing innovation**. Many voluntary organisations, particularly the longer-established and more stable, run the risk of becoming too stable, too preoccupied with service management – and less willing or able to concentrate on innovation and change, on finding 'solutions', rather than simply delivering good 'services'. For such organisations, does replication represent a safe option for the organisation, requiring it to spend valuable time which might otherwise be spent more creatively?

And it can **cost money**. It is a relatively simple process to disseminate, but a replication programme will often need substantial extra resources – which may need to be raised.





## 11 ADVANTAGES OF REPLICATION

Some key advantages are:

- You don't need to **reinvent the wheel** when trying to meet a particular need.
- There is a **proven product** to meet a known need in a definable way. This also provides a performance benchmark against which to judge the operation.
- There is a **network** and history of **practical experience** in running the activity, and technical assistance available to support newly developing projects. It is becoming increasingly hard to operate a small organisation completely on your own.
- All the **factors for success** have been thought through – quality assurance factors, financial robustness of the scheme, management and control mechanisms, etc.
- All the **technical and compliance problems** – from health and safety to equal opportunities – will have been considered and solved.

Replication may be a way of creating **sus-tainable mechanisms** for the provision of services. Increasingly we are having to ask where the money will come from in the longer term, as much of the funding around is available only for a pilot basis or on a yearly grant. The process of replication forces one to think about the longer-term funding implications of the service, and to build these factors into the package. If a sustainable long-term financial strategy can be devised, then this will make the product that much easier to 'sell' to purchasers and other operators. If this is to be the pattern for the future, then much more strategic financial thinking will need to be undertaken. Too many good ideas limit their vision to the end of the financial year, are too dependent on short-term funding for their existence, and even if they are viable now, they may not be sustainable into the future. This is becoming an increasingly important strategic issue for organisations to address.

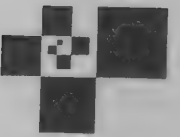
The market place demands **more uniform services**, branded to give the appearance of quality. The market

for bought in services is expanding rapidly, and this is an avenue which many voluntary organisations are seeking to go down. To develop successfully in this arena may require a more business-like approach than has been traditional in the voluntary sector. The future may be a 'supermarket of care' where purchasers come to see the wares on view and assess each particular service or solution that is available to meet their requirements on the basis of quality, price, outputs and outcomes that can be achieved, flexibility and adaptability to special needs and circumstances, cost effectiveness and economy, added value through external fundraising or use of volunteers, etc. Each 'product' on the shelves would come with all these features clearly spelled out.

Replication leads to a **collaborative approach** with several or many different people doing the same or similar things in different places all sharing common services and technologies. This allows the possibility of more being put into research and development than could be put by any one organisation. A common criticism of voluntary organisations is that because they are stretched for funds they continue doing what they have been doing for too long, fail to adapt quickly enough to changing circumstances, and do not put sufficient into R & D. A Citizens Advice Bureau network is far better placed to explore the new information and communication technologies than any one independent advice organisation would be.

Then there is **the wider market place** of in-dependent providers. Commercial providers may develop slick care packages which they are able to sell effectively to purchasers of services. This may create credibility and an appearance of quality. In a competitive marketplace, the economies of scale can pay for substantial marketing budgets. Developing along similar lines may be a requirement if voluntary providers are to get a look in. The marketplace of the future may require branded products regardless of who is the provider.





# REPLICATION AND RATIONALISATION 12

Surely there are too many organisations already? And the capacity to fund them is severely strained? If a large number of organisations each fulfilling an urgent need for a particular niche market all decide to replicate themselves – on the basis that if the service is needed here and works well here, then it is only right that it should be available elsewhere – then this will lead to proliferation. 300 organisations all seeking to establish national networks could lead to 10,000 new organisations. This highlights the importance of having a sustainable funding mechanism built into the structure of what is to be replicated.

And if there are to be that many new organisations, what are the administrative cost implications? 10,000 more organisations to be audited, to prepare reports for the Charity Commission, to attract trustees and bring them together for meetings, etc. We need to distinguish between replicating a service which may be desirable, and having that replicated service run by a new independent organisation set up specifically for the purpose – which is not the only possibility and may not always be the most appropriate way of getting the service started. An existing organisation may be able to run the service, avoiding the hazards and trauma of setting up a new agency.

There is also the problem of existing loose federations or networks of organisations. For many such as the independent advice centres, playbuses or neighbourhood energy action projects, it is possible to affiliate simply by paying a membership fee. This can result in a wide variation in quality and standards between different local projects. A more structured approach could lead to a general improvement in standards, and a quality assurance that a customer or user might expect. For example, the Kids Clubs Network is now running a quality assurance scheme, which certificates local projects (at a price) which meet certain standards.

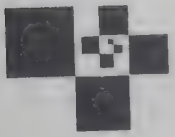
Such standardisation can be used to improve standards. But there may be a price to pay. Funders might use these standards as a prerequisite for funding, as a means of satisfying themselves as to the quality of the operation. But there might be drawbacks in adopting this approach: for example missing the innovative new approach, supporting and consolidating the status quo, and the loss of local independence.

Bearing this in mind, there are advantages in developing more uniform standards and the branding of projects. Any strategy for replication would also provide the opportunity for developing branding, better quality and more uniform standards in existing networks.

There are also opportunities for developing the replication of working practices, techniques and technologies amongst organisations doing similar things. For example, the opportunities for adopting this approach for Councils of Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureaux undoubtedly exist. And this is the approach that has been used successfully within the Citizens Advice Bureaux network.

If there is more potential in replicating innovative and successful services and working practices within existing organisations, than in cloning new organisations specially set up for the purpose, then we need to develop new thinking on how to support this process. It may require the development of a project management role by a more established local agency, which can provide the working space, the management services and the administration to support new local initiatives. This role has been carried out, largely on an ad hoc basis, by social action centres and settlements. But these exist where history has placed them, and some attention may need to be given to developing more such organisations and to resource them to carry out this role.





# 13 TEN LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

## for organisations considering replication

*Alan Lawrie, a management consultant, working on replication issues with several voluntary organisations, makes the following ten points:*

Commitment to certain **standards and quality of service** and the distinctive way of doing things is critical. If the locally replicated projects become too different, then it becomes hard to see exactly what is being offered as replicable, and the central branding suffers as a result.

Finding the **best structure** for developing the replication process is crucial. How is the central idea and vision of the project to be held and developed? Is there a tightly controlled central structure? Or will there be a loose federation of autonomous groups? Will there be a detailed legal agreement? Or a more informal 'understanding'? Deciding what's most appropriate for you is important.

The **original vision may change** in response to experience or changing need. Or to take the idea further or in another direction. This can enable the service to stay at the leading edge. But the way of managing the process, particularly where there are a lot of local projects, is important.

Most people would **prefer not to be clones**. This means building in local flexibility, facilitating local input, and creating a local sense of identity.

**Purchasers are beginning to spot gaps** and seek out services as they become more used to operating in the contract culture. They may want to approach voluntary organisations and ask them to quote for delivering a particular service to meet a need or to fill a gap in provision.

**Too rapid growth can cause problems**. There is a danger of growing too fast, by being offered large sums of money, by spawning more and more new branches, or by chasing too many ideas. There is an appropriate time to consider expansion, and an

appropriate rate to undertake it. What's the right size for your organisation? What's an appropriate rate of growth. You need to recognise this when planning your development strategy.

It takes **far longer to set up** something than is normally recognised or planned for. And this is particularly the case for truly innovative projects and developments, where the traditional three years may be too short. It's always slower to get started. There may be unforeseen difficulties. A long lead time may be required to set up subsequent projects.

**Start up costs are usually wrong**. As a rough guide, it usually takes three times as long and costs twice as much to set up something as the very best estimate. Over-optimistic budgeting and planning in the first instance can lead to pessimism and a sense of failure later on.

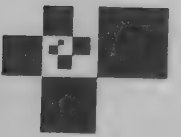
The legal and **organisational structures should develop** and solidify over time. Broad brush planning is best at the outset, leaving the flexibility to change as matters develop. This will almost always be better than getting into a rigid franchising mode from day 1.

There are **particular skills** needed to manage the replication process successfully:

- An understanding of money (**financial skills**).
- **Planning and business skills**.
- **Entrepreneurial skills** (as usually money will have to be laid out at risk).
- **Marketing and fundraising skills** (to sell the idea and get it funded).

The original innovator may be too close or too emotionally involved in the idea. Or may have the wrong qualities for the replication stage. The organisation will also need the resources, especially the time and the expertise. A question to ask at this stage is whether you have the right people and sufficient resources to implement a replication strategy, or whether you need external assistance.





# INCOME GENERATION AND INNOVATION 14

The creator of a successful pilot project will hold 'goodwill' in the form of intellectual property of some value. The question is whether this asset can be and should be exploited for gain. There are two opposing views on this in the voluntary sector. The first is that the ownership and control of ideas does not matter. That part of the mission of a voluntary organisation is to spread good practice freely by encouragement and enabling others. We have got more to gain from sharing and collaborating. On the other hand, many organisations now see themselves in the 'business' of delivering services from which they get an income, and perhaps even a profit. Here the consideration of ownership of ideas and exploiting them for gain, of competition and control have more relevance, much as they do in the private sector.

If an organisation wishes to exploit the intellectual property bound up in a successful project, then a number of opportunities exist for doing this. And these can bring a continuing stream of income back to the founding project to support further innovations and developments.

The dissemination process can be used to generate income through the sale of conference places, training and publications. Other opportunities include attracting sponsorship for these activities, and undertaking fundraising to subsidise them.

Selling expertise or consultancy to successor projects is another option. This can be part of a licensing or franchise agreement. A full business format franchise enables income to be generated in a variety of ways: a licence fee, provision of supplies and services, training and consultancy, an annual royalty.

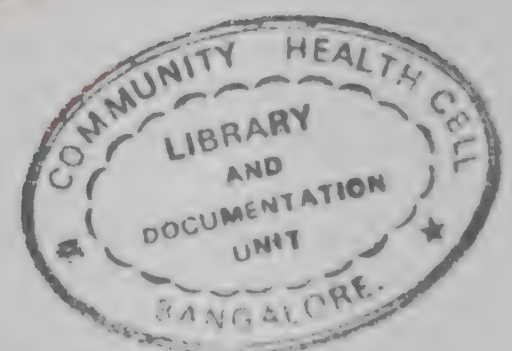
The increased emphasis on income generation suggests that some attention might usefully be paid to seeing whether a replication strategy can be used to develop a stream of income for the organisation.

In this context, the protection of intellectual property rights becomes important. What can't be protected

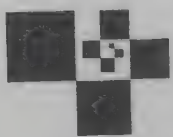
can be copied by others without any control by you. What isn't protected can also be copied by others. Protection can be obtained for your trading name, your trade marks, your logos, and anything that is patentable.

You don't have to hold on to your ideas. Good ideas should be spread and copied – whatever the mechanism you adopt for doing this. This is part of the ethos of the voluntary sector, which exists for public benefit and should not be there primarily for its own financial gain. But you can do a great deal to ensure that your ideas and innovations are developed according to your own requirements for control and return.

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## 15 INNOVATION AND THE ROLE OF FUNDERS

Funders, particularly trusts and foundations, have traditionally been interested in funding innovation. We have already pointed out the difference between a real innovation and a project claimed as being innovative by an applicant organisation. Funders like innovation for precisely the same reasons that they dislike core funding:

- The grant is an **investment** to help get a new idea off the ground.
- The support is for a **limited term** (a period of three years is usually held to be sufficient to prove the idea, after which it will be taken on by another funder – and part of the three-year task is to identify and develop sources of longer term funding).
- Then there is the question of **leverage**; the investment in the initial project has a 'payback' to the funder in terms of the wider dissemination of the ideas or projects that they helped fund in the first place. The funder has an **ownership** in the successful project as a 'founding stakeholder'.

This process of funders funding innovation has been used to create a whole range of services which are now commonplace – e.g. money advice centres, rape crisis lines, homework clubs, motor cycle projects.

But funders cannot continue to fund everything that is new or experimental in the voluntary sector, without addressing the question of what happens to the innovative projects they have funded when they have proved themselves in practice. There has to be:

- A further investment in dissemination and/or replication to develop the project further, to **get the ideas to a wider audience** with the possibility of them being taken up elsewhere.
- Attention given to **developing a financial structure** for the project so that it becomes viable and sustainable in the context of the resources available locally (or which can be generated) for social provision.

This means that funders should recognise that supporting the pump priming process no longer

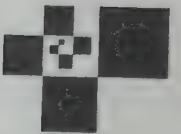
makes sense *on its own*. They must ask the project organiser at least to think about where the sustaining cash is to come from and how to create long term viability. There is plenty of scope for much more creative thinking on this.

Funders are there to take risks. This is part of backing innovation. As Tim Cook of the City Parochial Foundation said: "We're not angels of prophecy. We don't need to know at the outset where future funding is to come from, when we cannot even predict the success of the project. But we do need to ask the question."

There appears to be an ever-increasing pressure on funders for their resources. Replication also means proliferation. With more local projects, there is more demand for resources. BBC Children in Need, for example, has almost every branch of Homestart, Crossroads Care and others applying either for start up funding or to replace core funding which has disappeared. This means that innovation in *how* services are delivered, to ensure more efficient and effective use of the available resources, will be as important as innovation in *what* services are delivered. For example, innovation might be developed in:

- **Combining and collaborating:** as with the Newham Advice Arcade, where a group of advice giving agencies are coming together to provide a one-stop service to advice seekers. This collaboration between organisations and the creation of new organisational forms, such as service delivery consortia and innovation centres, may be an important area to focus on.
- **Using new technologies** for meeting needs (for example the use of interactive cable for home care, the use of bulletin boards for networking, the use of database system for recruiting and allocating volunteers).
- **Developing sustainable funding** for services where there is a continuing need (for example, in Dudley, the community health project is attached to the health centre funded by the Family Practitioner





Committee, which pays a rent to the community project where it is housed which provides the funding for the community health worker). This is important given that resources are limited and that there are plenty of good ideas for projects which could be developed.

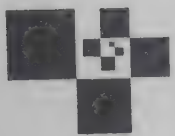
- Equally important to sustainable funding is the development of **asset building** schemes within the community to create a capital base which will sustain the community organisation into the future. Workspace centres are one example of this. Training and meeting facilities for community use another.
- Finding **new structures** for solving problems (in particular, recognising the importance of community involvement and community-generated solutions to persistent problems, that the more traditional mechanisms of paying for professionally staffed services to meet needs are either failing to meet or becoming too expensive to sustain).

Not all funders may recognise that they have a special role to play. They are a source of free money which can be used for investment and development, where many of the applicant organisations have little in the way of reserves, and may be so busy just trying to keep their heads above water that they are unable to deal with longer term issues without external support. Many applicants are reticent to suggest development proposals for taking their innovation forward, when they believe that funders are more interested in supporting direct services to meet manifest and pressing needs.

Central government may have an important role too. If central government is concerned with strategic issues concerning the delivery of services and the meeting of need, then it may be concerned to see the development of local projects to meet particular needs. By investing the replication process, central government can facilitate the creation of good quality local projects. Examples of this include the support for the development of Home Start. This might have

remained a local Leicester scheme, had not the DHSS been so impressed with its value as a preventive scheme that it decided to fund Home Start Consultancy for the purpose of developing further Home Start schemes in other areas. But this can only be done where the funding implications are fully considered. Home Start schemes are dependent on social services funding at a local level; and if this dries up, then the projects may no longer be viable. With Kids Clubs Network, central government has recently provided a line of funding to set up local schemes, but this raises the question of how this will continue once the original funding commitments have been fulfilled.





## 16 WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING ?

### Projects

*There are many barriers to projects addressing the problem of replication which need to be understood:*

**Short-termism.** People's perspective of the long term seems to be getting shorter and shorter. The immediate response to a need is to suggest the provision of a service, and this has led to a proliferation of short-term funded services. Beyond their initial phase, these may have no visible means of support. Longer-term thinking on sustainability is not being sufficiently addressed. The questions of sustainable strategies for the development of the voluntary service provision can usefully be set alongside ideas and opportunities for replication.

**Contracts are constricting thinking.** Organisations are asked to tender to provide a service. Purchasers just want the service to be provided; they are less interested in the wider issues or in finding 'solutions' to the problem. There is compartmentalisation, as many purchasers do not have responsibility or disposable funds to spend on the wider problem, they just have to show value for money in the purchase of the service. And there is little money available for anything extra. The contractee may have under-budgeted to get the contract, or feel under pressure to cut costs to the bone.

Smaller agencies, where much of the innovation occurs, do not have the **person power** or the technical expertise or the time to develop and implement a replication strategy. As Viv Davies of Applejack's said: "Replication may mean the loss of a good person to help set up the new project. This may be critical to the success of the new initiative. But can we afford to do this?".

**Parochialism.** Local agencies, however large, have local funding to support them and a local remit for their work. This constrains any national replication strategy, even though funding might be obtainable

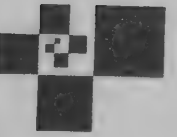
to support this work. All social action centres are local, for example, and will be subject to this local constraint. A good example of the localness constraining action is the local replication of creative arts centres within Devon, which have proved a great success; but there is no ambition to develop this at a national level.

Immediate financial pressures and **lack of working capital** may act as an inhibitor to doing anything but try to run the organisation successfully. In general, there is not enough free money to pay for R & D in the voluntary sector. Many grant-seekers don't believe that there is money available to support the development of replication. This may be a perception rather than represent the reality. Or they may lack the appropriate fundraising contacts. Funders may be keen. Another problem is the opportunity cost: "If we go to that particular funder to support replication, we cannot expect to get a grant from the same source for our next innovative project".

A **self-imposed** constraint, possibly tunnel vision. The innovative project may not want to go any further with the idea (although this should not be a barrier to getting funded in the first place). There's already too much to do in doing what we want to be doing. As Robin Currie of PSS said: "I need persuading to move from dissemination to replication. Dissemination is part of the job description of our project leaders – public speaking, conferring, networking, hosting visits, publishing. We give our ideas plenty of exposure, and many organisations have successfully adopted and adapted our innovations. However, fundamentally we are funded to provide services. A fully fledged programme of replication would require additional resources."

The **management committee.** Persuading the management committee to allocate resources for wider purposes may be a real barrier.





### **Networks and other national bodies**

In theory, networks and national bodies should be ideally placed to assist in the replication process. As central agencies with a national perspective, they are in a good position to take the lead in spreading good practice across the country, and in developing services in areas where there aren't any. National brand charities such as Age Concern, Barnardos, the NSPCC, and many others have taken a lead in selling their services to local authorities. They have had the resources to invest in this process, and they have done just that.

However, these organisations are the 'haves'. If we look at many less well-funded national associations and federations, they inevitably find it much more difficult to do anything – for example networks such as the National Association of Councils of Voluntary Service or the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux. They may be under the democratic control of their members, who might be concerned with more pressing short-term issues. They may feel that they don't have either the expertise or the resources. Or they may never have considered any national development strategy, preferring to service their existing members.

### **Innovation centres**

Traditionally, social action centres and settlements have promoted innovation. They have the buildings, the resources, the credibility and a desire to innovate and respond to local need. But as already mentioned, these are invariably local bodies with a largely local perspective. Unlike the business sector, there is no small firms development service for voluntary bodies, and no appropriate source of investment funding (the Local Investment Fund idea is not really appropriate for replication, as there is no guaranteed payback of income to pay off the loan and its interest).

### **Consultants and training providers**

There is the creative thinking, the energy and the enthusiasm amongst consultants and training providers, as they make their living by helping their clients by providing up-to-the-minute ideas. And there are training courses and consultancies specialising in strategic development, development of local branch structures, expansion strategies, replication beyond the first project, and even charity franchising. But their ability to provide this technical expertise depends on attracting customers who can afford the price.





## 17 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FUNDERS

Funders should recognise that they have an important role in funding the replication process.

- Given the problems that projects face, particularly the smaller and purely local project, funders have the **resources** to intervene.
- Given a traditional **commitment to innovation**, investing in dissemination and discussion, and providing support for the replication process where appropriate are obvious next steps.
- Funders have a **unique perspective** on social needs through the spectrum of applications they receive. They can spot new ideas, emerging trends and current thinking much more easily. They can also respond in a strategic way when they see common needs – for example, the City Parochial Foundation faced with a mountain of applications for minibuses, decided instead to explore a community transport solution to this transport need being expressed by local groups in London.

Independent funders will inevitably bear most of this responsibility. Local and central government may also have a role (for example, the Urban Programme in its early days played a significant role in replicating successful projects).

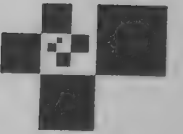
There needs to be somewhere to go for investment in replication. As Robin Currie of PSS said: “Who pays for replication? We have a successful self-funding project. It embodies a new approach and could be transferred. We are prepared to release a person on a consultancy basis to provide expertise, training and support for another organisation to replicate the project. But who will pay for this? Not our local funders. And finding outside funding is problematic.” This means a change in thinking by funders is needed.

Funders need to understand better the innovation process, which they have been committed to funding for so many years:

- They might develop a **checklist** of how they will seek applications for innovation and how they might then fund the different stages of the process.

- And at the same time, they might recognise that **innovation is not all**, and tell the outside world that they are not interested in simply proliferating innovative approaches to problems.
- They might seek to **understand the innovation process** and whether it works. A great deal of history is missing. What has happened to those innovative projects and programmes they funded in the past? Did they work? Were the ideas and lessons disseminated? Were the ideas replicated or adapted? Does the approach continue? Why did some projects fail? Or not sustain themselves as well as they might have done? And who took over funding responsibility for the successes? All this is important information, which will give clues to how to operate better in the future. Some research would be needed, but the information should be readily available from their files.
- They might learn to fund service delivery in a better way, which seeks to provide a sustainable mechanism for continuing the service. Things to look at beyond simply funding the service as a pilot project for a number of years are:
  - funding for the development of **sustainability** in how the service is resourced (to create a greater degree of long-term viability).
  - funding to build a **capital base** for the service (which might generate income subsequently).
  - investment in other **income generating** opportunities.
  - looking at how organisations can add value through **volunteer inputs**, leveraging in other resources, and operating more effectively by obtaining the community’s involvement, and finding ways of investing in these processes.
- Funders might encourage applicant projects to put more emphasis on ensuring their sustainability by:
  - funding organisations to develop sustainable **future strategies** for themselves – developing more secure sources of longer-term funding to support their work into the future.
  - funding the investment **required** to achieve these strategies.





- encouraging **new ways of working**, and especially partnerships, collaborations, coalitions and alliances.
- Funders might give some priority to **investing in the stage beyond** the pilot innovation stage, as Children in Need has done with Network 81, STEPS, LOOK and PAIN (Parents against Injustice).
- Funders need to adapt to the more hostile funding environment that currently exists, where there simply isn't the money to do everything. This may mean:
  - investing in the **development of those projects they currently support**, rather than continually finding new projects to fund.
  - encouraging the organisations they do fund to **add value** (in some of the ways suggested above) or to find less expensive ways of working which consume less annual grant income.

Funders might wish to take a strategic overview of what is happening in the voluntary sector, and consider whether there are too many organisations and too many small organisations.

**Is small beautiful?** Marilyn Taylor of the School of Advanced Urban Studies in Bristol believes that the marketplace is against small organisations surviving for the following reasons:

- The **demography of volunteers** means that they simply won't be able to attract the volunteer support they need to operate effectively.
- The **complexity** of the accounting and other regulatory regimes makes it difficult for a smaller organisation to operate.
- The **contract culture** and the move towards service agreements favours the larger organisation, and means that traditional grant aid from a local authority may become a thing of the past.

How many existing organisations will survive? For example in Easterhouse in Glasgow, a community of some 50,000, there are estimated to be some 500 voluntary initiatives, each one struggling for funding,

each having to find a committee of committed people and each trying its best to keep going. If the current state of affairs is no longer sensible, can funders play any role in the process of rationalisation of what's already there? And will this process throw up new approaches to innovation and replication?

Anyone looking at the way voluntary action is organised and funded in this country must be aware that all is not well. The significant changes over the past two decades, and in particular the growing competition for funding, the emergence of the contract culture, the rolling back of the welfare state due to financial pressures and the impact of a more unemployed and elderly population, the continued breakdown of the family and extended family networks, the changes in work patterns, all have major implications on social need and the resources available to meet these needs. The voluntary sector has as a third sector become a crucial player in the meeting of these needs. Nowhere more apparent than with the Social Fund, a government fund to meet the emergency needs of those most in need. It is a capped fund, and when the money runs out applicants are advised to find a charity. So charity has become a provider of last resort. If the voluntary sector is not just based on a voluntary impulse, but has become an integral and important part of the pattern of provision, then thought needs to be addressed to the strategic development of the sector so that it can fulfil this role more effectively. But where is this strategic thinking to come from? And who is going to pay for what emerges from it?





## 18 RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBLE IDEAS FOR FURTHER ACTION

*The aim of the brainstorm session was to come up with some thoughts on whether there was any role for funders and others to do anything further to facilitate the dissemination and replication processes. The following is a list of the ideas that emerged from the session:*

### Research

Understanding **the innovation process**. Research to understand what has happened to innovative projects and approaches that have been funded in the past, and whether there has been a payback in the past with the ideas behind the pilot project being accepted more widely or developed elsewhere. Or whether the word 'innovation' is just being used as a lever to obtain funding.

Understanding **the barriers to replication**. Research might explore some of the barriers to replication including:

- Geographic: local projects unable or unwilling to operate beyond their locality.
- Financial: organisations do not have risk capital or pay for R & D expenditure.
- Expertise: organisations lack the expertise to pursue a replication strategy.
- Decision processes: the committee is unwilling.
- Motivation: they simply don't want to.
- Personalities: you can't replicate charismatic leadership or founding zeal.

A better understanding of the innovation and replication processes could lead to more effective intervention by funders.

How purchasers make **purchasing decisions**.

Researching how purchasing decisions are made and how more innovative ideas might be selected by purchasers. This might generate ideas for:

- More effective ways of making project ideas known to purchasers.
- Identifying the key points that purchasers want to know about before making a decision to purchase.

- Assessing the weight that purchasers give to quality of service, user and community involvement, and long-term benefits.

This is where the real market for the purchase of innovation lies. So getting better information to purchasers and finding ways to get them to use the information when making purchasing decisions should have a positive payback. The Policy Studies Institute/Department of Health Caring for People initiative provides a wealth of experience on purchasers' purchasing decisions and other factors which may impinge on or constrain them.

### Investing in the dissemination and replication processes

Encouraging individual trusts to give priority to **investing in innovation**:

Those trusts that are interested in supporting innovation should be encouraged to invest beyond the pump priming stage. Good practice should require that the original proposal includes and the funder provides a budget for:

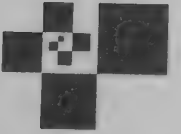
- Evaluating the success of the pilot phase.
- Disseminating the results.
- Assessing the feasibility of replicating the project or incorporating some of its features into other work.

This would set the scene for any investment in the next stage, and the importance of further investment in those innovations which trusts had backed should be emphasised. Good practice could be promoted by:

- An ACF seminar on investment in replication.
- A simple good practice guide.

Creation of an **'investment fund'**. This would be a 'merchant bank' or 'venture capital' approach to investing in innovation. A fund would be created for this specific purpose, which would be put up by a consortium of trusts. There are two recent instances of this approach: the Charity Know How Fund, where





a group of trusts matched Foreign Office support to invest in the development of the voluntary sector in Central and Eastern Europe; and the Local Investment Fund (LIF), largely supported by companies, led by the National Westminster Bank, with the support of the Department of the Environment. The resources of this fund could be supplemented by making relevant training and good quality consultancy available to those obtaining financial awards from the fund.

Support for **social innovation centres**. This involves recognising the important role that Settlements and Social Action Centres have played in the fostering of innovation through providing office space and facilities, management and support services, fundraising capacity and credibility, and a ready made structure for the development of innovation. Centres might be helped to build a stronger capacity, perhaps to extend their role to fostering collaboration and combination where appropriate, and to redefine their mission accordingly.

## Facilitating the flow of information

**Benchmarking.** Identifying critical success factors and good practice which can be learned from, and developing performance measures from it, and then using these to aid other organisations to improve their practice and performance. Benchmarking could be undertaken for particular types of service where it was felt that there was considerable scope for performance to be improved.

**Dissemination of good practice.** Identify 'star projects' from which lessons might be learned to influence the direction of other projects. Reports could be written up on these emphasising the key lessons to be learned, and these reports could be published or used in training or used as handouts for site visits. The leaders of these star projects could be encouraged and even supported to expend a part of their time in:

- Undertaking training and speaking.

- Hosting visits from organisations that wish to learn.
- Mentoring other organisations.

Interestingly, the Department of the Environment is considering this approach to disseminate good practice amongst Single Regeneration Budget initiatives.

**Fostering creative thinking.** Setting up a 'fellowship' scheme for social innovators to address particular issues or key areas of need. They would be given the time and the space to try to develop creative solutions to some of the problems that concern them, and the opportunity for some of their ideas to be taken forward. This approach may be developed by the Association of Charitable Foundations with support from Telethon.

**A task force for change.** Taking particular themes, and then trying to develop a strategy for improving the ways in which people attempt to meet these needs, based on current best practice. For example in the field of advice giving. The task force would be charged with looking at the wide range of approaches to the problem and the variety of different types of project, with the aim of coming up with ideas for sharing best practice, creating greater economies through collaboration and introducing innovation.

**Bargain basement guides.** The publication of simple explanatory guides to:

- The replication process (including the different models for replication, and a decision tree for assessing the most appropriate).
- Mechanisms for dissemination and how to judge their effectiveness.
- Sustainability and how to develop it.

## Investing in technical expertise

Developing a **centre of technical expertise** on replication. Assisting in the creation of one or more centres of expertise on all aspects of replication,





which would be able to advise or help or provide training on matters such as:

- Mechanisms for replication.
- Centre-local relationships.
- Protection of intellectual property.
- Licensing and legal arrangements.
- Budgeting, planning and forecasting.
- Initiating projects from scratch.
- Opportunities for earning money from replication.

This might be developed through existing management support agencies and consultancies with a particular interest in this area, rather than creating new centres of expertise.

**Creating blueprints.** Helping organisations that are interested in replicating themselves to create blueprints, by providing support for an appropriate consultancy. Possibly also producing a 'do-it-yourself guide' to creating a blueprint. The blueprint can be a useful first step in implementing a replication strategy.

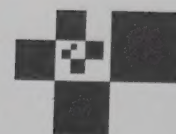
**Marketing successful projects.** Investing in the marketing of successful projects by:

- Creating a clearing house for replicable projects which could be made available to purchasers. This could be in the form of a 'trade fair', a 'roadshow', a directory or yearbook, a 'recipe book' of successful projects, a system using the internet, etc.
- Moving beyond information to explore ways of marketing and the active selling of ideas to potential purchasers.

**Training and support for intermediaries.** Providing training and technical help and support to network and intermediary organisations whose role is to support local projects in a particular sphere. This might include organisations that support the voluntary sector generally as well as those federations and networks concerned with particular themes or types of organisation.

**Training and support for small projects.** Where the project wishes to develop and implement a replication strategy, a pilot workshop might be set up to help them consider the issues and think through their next steps.





# APPENDIX

## Developing Replication Strategies: the experience of working with agencies

by Peter Houghton, Charity Franchise Service

The Charity Franchise Service now has a range of experience in helping organisations look for the best means available to replicate projects that would clearly benefit clients in other locations.

For the purposes of this paper I want to divide those organisations we have assisted into three types. Each has a characteristically different approach to looking at replication. All, however, have one theme in common. They saw replication in today's funding climate not only as sharing knowledge and experience, but as a means of income enhancement. The three types of organisations are: charities; health service trusts; and religious organisations (which are sometimes also charities).

In all cases our approach has been to analyse the project presented to see if it is a piece of work that is of sufficient quality and likely to be useful elsewhere, whether it is relatively uncomplicated to manage, and whether it has a distinctiveness as against other similar services. We have also tried to assess whether the process of replication would attract finance and to identify those sources.

### 1. Charities

We have dealt exclusively with small charities, some undertaking local projects (e.g. an arts service in Devon), some with national ambitions for their local service (e.g. Archway Foundation), some that are essentially user or patient groups (e.g. the Rett Syndrome Association). In all these cases the services were of good quality, but the organisations concerned lacked the finances and sometimes the time to undertake the development work involved. What they really needed was not just a replication appraisal for their project, but assistance to help them establish another project. In all 14 projects that we investigated, we found that 11 did have a good service which could advantageously have been organised elsewhere. However, in all but one case we were not able to help with this.

In the one case where we were able to help – to extend expertise in the management of holiday caravans for families with severely handicapped members – we were able to benefit from the excellent management and fundraising of the agency itself. In all other cases, the management and fundraising capacity of the agency was not able to stretch to this additional task – although

one agency, the Archway Foundation, has developed a mechanism for forming new projects in new locations as a result of being able to attract financial support to their central organisation. Replication, however, is a slow process in the prevailing cold climate of public funding.

There are three lessons we have learned:

- A number of organisations do have excellent projects capable of replication, and these can be identified and 'packaged' accordingly.
- The organisations generally do not have the time and resources themselves to undertake the replication process, and are looking for external help to do this.
- The operation of a model project does not necessarily mean that the staff running that project have either the developmental skills to extend that project into new locations or the time to do so.
- The immediate financial pressures act as an inhibitor for this kind of development.

### 2. Health Service Trusts

We have worked with three trusts to see how they might market good practice to other locations. Essentially, this means selling services in the internal market. We have had two successes here, probably because the purchaser-provider culture encourages this kind of approach.

The first service was the extension of a model of community palliative care for the dying. This service based at the Middlesex Hospital had developed a distinctive model of care – 'hospice at home' – for the terminally ill, concentrating on the management of pain, comfort and morale in the last three months. It is a multi-disciplinary medically-led service offering patients 24-hour home care. By establishing the root distinctions of the service and the quality controls needed, it has been possible to 'sell' the service to other Community Health Trusts.

In another case, a voluntary organisation specialising in the care of people with HIV/AIDS had developed a cafe service which was distinctive in its ability to offer healthy meals and meals-on-wheels of an appropriate kind for this clientele. The ability to operate a cafe both to the required hygiene and operational standards and to specialise for a particular market has enabled it to

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expand to two other HIV/AIDS locations and also to work with an African community needing a meals service catering to their own particular food needs.

In the third case, a counselling service had been developed in one Trust for patients suffering various kinds of trauma. This specialist service has been able, with the support of various Trusts, to make available its model of counselling within the M25. Further expansion is now envisaged. In this example, essentially the Trust enables a specialist counsellor consortium to operate as a kind of voluntary agency, selling its services through its network of suitably qualified counsellors.

The lessons from the health service world are:

- The willingness to look for cost-effective services does provide a window of opportunity for projects that have geared themselves up to sell services into that market.
- The market is nevertheless constrained by a need to concentrate on essentials, due to funding pressures.
- There are difficult issues in the NHS where personalities and philosophies of care clash dramatically, thereby inhibiting growth. Thus 'political' skills may be needed to make progress.

### 3. Religious organisations

We have worked with 7 organisations that are essentially outreach projects for groups committed strongly to a religious way of life; six of these were Christian, one Muslim.

All these organisations see this kind of operation as both a way of living their religion and of demonstrating (and sometimes proselytising) it to others. Of the 7 projects, 2 have developed successfully in other locations where they are connected with allied or sympathetic church groups.

The Muslim organisation was founded by the more fundamentalist members of a Turkish community in London to 'rescue' their young people from 'the evils of drugs and sex'. Essentially it provided a refuge and advice centre with religious teaching. They have successfully sustained this project and co-operated with a Yemeni group to provide a similar service for Yemenis.

Of the Christian organisations, one is an organisation providing home care, known as the Well Spring Trust,

and is affiliated to the Evangelical Alliance. There is no doubt as to the real quality and replicability of its service, but there is some suspicion from other professionals as to the group's motivation. This has inhibited its expansion.

Other services have been concerned with the development of Catholic outreach to drug users, to assist elderly people living alone when they come out of hospital, and a project to expand youth camps for Christian young people. All have been partly successful because of the links they have with other churches or groups.

The lessons from this type of organisation are:

- The existence of networks of philosophically similar groups facilitates the expansion of similar services.
- There are issues concerning evangelism of a particular world view in a plural society that create anxieties about such services, and this needs resolution.
- Communities of religious can call upon resources, particularly time and talent, not always available to others.

### Summary

We can say that the development of franchised and replicated services is possible, and is to the mutual benefit of both sides.

It has proved easier to move in this direction in the new culture of the Health Service and within the network culture of religion than with 'lone organisations' in the traditional voluntary sector.

There is a clear need to find a way of helping projects which have proved themselves and represent best practice in meeting a known need to overcome the organisational and financial barriers to development elsewhere.

There is a need for a better means of sharing replication ideas in the voluntary and public sectors, rather as business franchise ideas are shared in franchise magazines.









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# **BUILDING ON INNOVATION**

**Facilitating the dissemination of good ideas  
and the replication of successful projects**

- The voluntary sector sees itself committed to innovation, and many grants are made by independent and statutory funders to support pilot projects or promote the development of new initiatives.
- The next stages for any successful project or initiative are dissemination – circulating information and discussing what has been learned and achieved – leading, possibly, to replication – the establishment of similar projects elsewhere.
- Dissemination is generally recognised as important, both by the projects themselves and their funders. But much less attention has been paid to replication.
- The replication process may be particularly important in the context of the contract culture, for developing and selling successful services to purchasers. But it could also play a significant part in the strategic development of the voluntary sector at a time when there is fierce competition for funds and many projects are finding it hard to survive – by focusing on quality of service, critical success factors, cost effectiveness and sustainable funding mechanisms, and by providing mechanisms for networks of local projects to link together and collaborate.
- This report addresses the issue of how successful projects might be replicated, and proposes some ideas for facilitating this process.

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